

City Manager Update - 11/3/23

It is hard to believe the Holiday Season is rapidly approaching. Airing of the Quilts, Blue Santa kick-off, Gingerbread Man adoption, Turkey Trot, Thanksgiving, Festival of Lights, and Christmas will come and go before you know it. As a reminder, City Hall will be closed on **Friday, November 10, 2023** in observance of **Veteran's Day**. City Hall office hours during the week will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

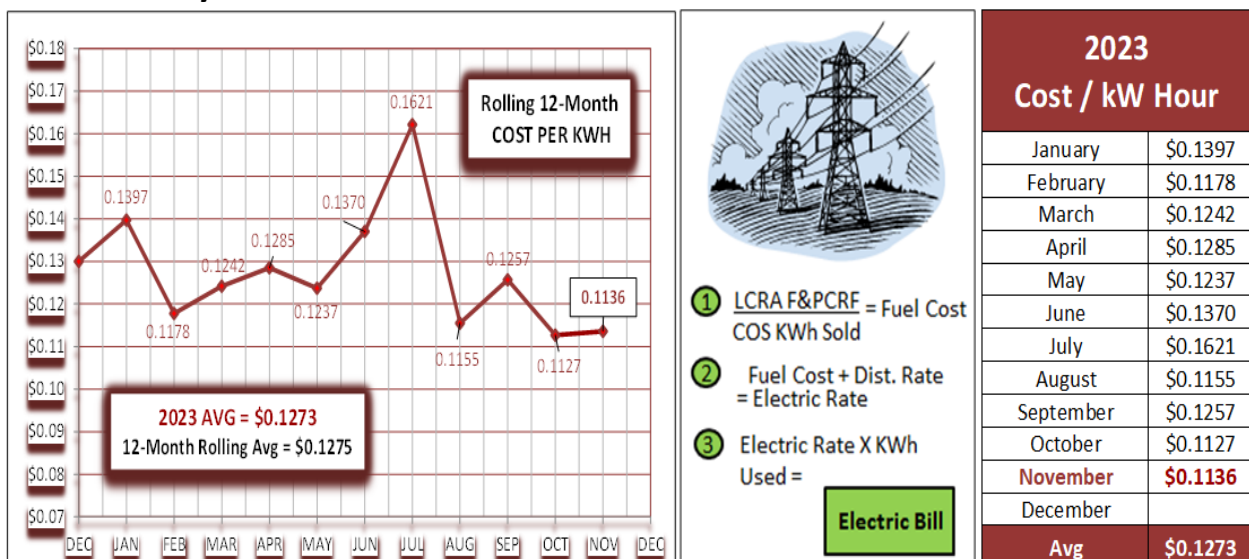
Daylight Saving time will end at 2:00 am on **Sunday, November 5, 2023**. Be sure to move your clocks BACK 1-hour -- "Spring Forward – Fall Back". It's also a good time to change out the batteries in your smoke detectors. Most areas of the United States observe daylight saving time, the exceptions being Arizona, Hawaii, and the overseas territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. The Uniform Time Act of 1966 established the system of uniform daylight savings time throughout the US. Click on the following link for more information → https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daylight_saving_time. Whether you are a fan of daylight savings time or not....I'm looking forward to the extra hour of sleep!

Early voting for the November 7, 2023 Constitutional Amendments and Special Election began on Monday, October 23, 2023 and will end on Friday, November 3, 2023 at 7:00 pm. There are fourteen (14) propositions to amend the Texas Constitution under consideration. Here is a link from the [Texas League of Women Voters \(LWV\)](#) that provides a detailed explanation of each proposition. On each amendment, a "yes" vote supports amending the Constitution. A "no" vote opposes amending the Constitution. A majority vote is required for passage. Election Day is on **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**. Here is a link to the Bastrop County votes website → <https://www.bastropvotes.org/> for more information about the voting schedule and polling locations. Sample ballots are also available by Precinct. Please note that you can early vote at any of the locations listed no matter which Precinct you reside. However, if you wait until Election Day you must vote at the Precinct location where you are registered.

Here is a list of significant accomplishments, events, and activities since my last report:

- 1) Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** - An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in NOVEMBER. Fuel cost per kWh vary month to month and are based upon electric utility generation, transmission, line loss, unmetered sales, and service fees. The cost per kWh for November is \$0.05857. This represents a **1.46% INCREASE** in fuel cost compared to October's fuel cost of \$0.05773. Adding City's distribution fee of \$0.0550, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during NOVEMBER will be \$0.11357 per kWh. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of Texas has published cold weather energy-savings tips → <https://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/Save.aspx>. Below you will find a "rolling" 12-month residential cost per kWh and a fuel cost comparison chart. On average, the cost per kWh for residential electric service in Smithville is between 12-13 cents.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh – NOVEMBER 2023



City Manager Update – 11/3/23 (Continued)

- 2) **City of Smithville Awarded \$25,000 LCRA Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) Grant** – The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) awarded the City of Smithville a \$25,000 grant to help cover the cost of a new HVAC system and tinted window for the Lost Pines Artisans Association located at 301 Burleson in the city-owned Mary Nichols Art Center. Several local artists provide classes at the center and musicians meet there to give lessons and record local performing artists. After the new HVAC system is installed, the facility will have better climate control, which will enable it to be open to the public for more events such as artist classes and use of the clay and music studios. The City of Smithville is fortunate to have LCRA as a community partner. Programs like Steps Forward and the Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) have definitely made a positive impact. Construction / installation of the new HVAC system will begin after the first of the year.
- 3) **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event Held** - On Saturday, October 21st, the City of Smithville partnered with the City of Bastrop, Keep Smithville Beautiful, Bastrop County, and Lee County to hold a Fall Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event. The HHW facility is located at SE 2nd and Taylor Street. Approximately 45 vehicles brought used paint for FREE disposal. Eighteen (18) volunteers helped make the event a success. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 4) **National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day Held** – The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day was held on Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 10 am to 2 pm at City Hall. Approximately 100-lbs of out-of-date prescription drugs / medications were collected and discarded. Special THANKS to Sharlene Scheler, RN and Detective Jad Hubbare of the Smithville Police Department for their efforts.
- 5) **City Council Approves Smithville Solar Two, LLC Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)** – On October 13, 2023, the Smithville City Council unanimously approved entering into a 25-year solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Smithville Solar Two, LLC to build a 1-Megawatt single axis photovoltaic solar array on property located next to the Smithville Municipal Airport on the west side of Loop 230. Our current wholesale power agreement with LCRA allows the City of Smithville to purchase up to 15% of alternative energy through a 3rd party. The existing solar array generates approximately 2.9 Megawatts (6%) of clean energy per year and our year-to-date cost savings from PPA-1 is \$35k. Under the new PPA-2 agreement, the City will save a minimum of \$220k (approximately \$9k per year) over the 25-year term. The cost savings will help lower the cost associated with maintaining our distribution system. Construction of the second solar array would begin at the beginning of the new year with the system commissioned and operational by January 2025. All costs for building the second solar array will be the responsibility of UGE / Smithville Solar Two, LLC.
- 6) **City Council to Consider Revision to Downtown Sidewalk Ordinance** - The City of Smithville Code of Ordinances, Chapter 3, Building Regulations, Article 3.08.009 – “Occupation of Sidewalk by Merchants” states:

“Nothing in this article shall be construed as to prevent any merchant from occupying not more than one-half (1/2) of any sidewalk in receiving and forwarding goods, wares, and merchandise, provided the sidewalk shall be cleared as of the merchants closing time. Permits may be approved for longer period of time in case of special sidewalk sales, special occasions, or situations if approved by the city manager. The city council shall maintain the power to review and amend any permits issued.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires a 36-inch clear width on all public sidewalks to allow unobstructed access for wheelchair and/or handicapped individuals. In addition, Chapter 3, Building Regulations, Article 3.08.009 requires all merchandise on the sidewalk be cleared upon the store’s closing time unless prior approval of the City Manager and/or City Council has been obtained (e.g., via permit, encroachment license, MOU, etc.). During COVID, the city authorized merchants to establish “pocket patios” via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow tables and chairs to be placed on the sidewalk (or in parking spaces) in front of the business owner’s establishments in order to provide a safe, socially distant, outdoor space for dining / eating. The pocket patio MOU’s have all expired and need to be renewed. No other MOU’s or permits to permanently store and/or display merchandise on the sidewalk have been issued. This will be a topic for discussion and possible action during the **November 13, 2023** council meeting. The Council must decide (with collaborative citizen / business owner input) what changes to the current ordinance (if any) are required to promote commerce, ensure safety, reduce clutter, and comply with ADA requirements.

City Manager Update – 11/3/23 (Continued)

- 7) **Wastewater Rates - Three Month Winter Water Averaging Begins December 1st** - Wastewater rates in Smithville are set by using a three (3) month “winter” water use average between DECEMBER and FEBRUARY. You can reduce your monthly wastewater (sewer) bill by conserving water during these months. In the event that the monthly water usage for any month is less than the computed “winter water average,” the lesser of the two shall be used as the basis for calculating the wastewater bill. Residential customers pay a \$15.00 sewer base rate per month and \$4.00 sewer fee per 1000 gallons of water used. Cut back on water use between December and February and let the savings begin! For a list of all utility rates in Smithville, click on the following link → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/city-departments/utilities/rates/>.
- 8) **2023 Notice-To-Airman (NOTAM) Authorization for Smithville Municipal Airport Submitted** - The City updated its annual FAA Notice-to-Airman (NOTAM) authorization to provide the names and contact phone numbers of the individuals authorized to submit a NOTAM. A NOTAM is a notice filed with an aviation authority to alert aircraft pilots of potential hazards along a flight route or at a location that could affect the safety of the flight. NOTAMs are unclassified notices or advisories that contain information concerning the establishment, conditions or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure or hazard, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel and systems concerned with flight operations. NOTAMs are issued (and reported) for a number of reasons, such as:
- Hazards such as air shows, parachute jumps, kite flying, lasers, rocket launches, etc.
 - Flights by important people such as POTUS (sometimes referred to as Temporary Flight Restrictions, TFRs)
 - Closed runways for refurbishment / repairs
 - Inoperable radio navigational aids
 - Military exercises with resulting airspace restrictions
 - Inoperable lights on tall obstructions (e.g., beacon)
 - Temporary erection of obstacles near airfields (e.g., cranes)

Sandy Meyerson, and **JD Casteel** have been assigned and have agreed to assist the Airport Manager with establishing, modifying, or cancelling of Class D NOTAMS (Notice-To-Airmen) affecting Smithville-Crawford Municipal Airport (identifier 84R).

- 9) **2024 LCRA “Steps Forward Day” Project Application Submitted** – The City of Smithville submitted our 2024 “Steps Forward Day” project application(s) to the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) for consideration. Volunteers from LCRA will gather on Friday, April 12, 2024, to work on community projects throughout LCRA’s service territory. Examples of potential projects include cleaning parks, painting pavilions, planting trees or doing carpentry work. Last year, LCRA volunteers trimmed trees and cleaned around gravesites at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. LCRA also painted the interior of the restrooms at Riverbend Park. This year (if selected), LCRA volunteers will trim the crepe myrtles on Charleson Blvd and repaint all of the ornamental lights in the downtown area. The city will provide the supplies and equipment necessary to support the project(s) with LCRA providing the manpower (typically 20-25 volunteers). The City of Smithville is fortunate to have LCRA as a community partner. Programs like Steps Forward and the Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) have definitely made a positive impact.

There are several events / activities planned this weekend and the next few weeks in Smithville:

The **Planning & Zoning Commission** will be meeting on **Tuesday, November 7, 2023** (from 6:00 to 7:00 pm) at Smithville City Hall.

City Hall will be closed **Friday, November 10, 2023** in observance of Veteran’s Day.

VFW Post 1309 is hosting their annual Veteran’s event in Smithville on **Saturday, November 11, 2023**. The Ladies Auxiliary will have a raffle and cake walk. The ceremony starts at 11:00 am followed by a Chili or Stew meal that is FREE to the public. Representative Stan Gerdes is the speaker.

The annual **Airing of the Quilts and Historic Home Tour** will be held on **Saturday, November 11, 2023** from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Some of the quilts on display will be for sale. There will also be a quilt raffle. Sponsorship opportunities are available for this event. Contact the Chamber at 512-237-2313 with any questions.

City Manager Update – 11/3/23 (Continued)

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for **5:00 pm Monday, November 13, 2023** at City Hall. Click for [AGENDA](#). NOTE: The meeting will start 1-hour earlier than normal due to two (2) executive sessions for Open Meetings Act Training and setting 2024 City Manager Goals & Objectives.

The Smithville Police Department, the Chamber of Commerce, and First National Bank invite you to kick-off the Smithville Holiday Season during the Chamber mixer on **Thursday, November 16, 2023** from 5-7 p.m. at 312 Main Street. Cash donations can be made at the event or at the Smithville PD.

The First United Methodist Church (FUMC) will be hosting their annual Thanksgiving luncheon for all City personnel on **Thursday, November 16, 2023** at 11:00 am. Turkey, dressing, and all the fixings (including homemade desserts) will be prepared and served to show appreciation to all City employees. Councilmembers are also invited to attend. The FUMC has sponsored this event for over a decade and the City of Smithville is truly thankful for their effort(s). NOTE: **City Hall will be CLOSED from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm** to allow employees to enjoy the event.

The Smithville Recreation Center is sponsoring a [TURKEY TROT](#) on Saturday, **November 25, 2023** at 8:30 am.

Friday, December 1, 2023 is the Smithville VFD Christmas Party. They are having it in the Pavilion at Riverbend Park. Social starts at 6:00 p.m. with dinner served at 7:00 pm. Councilmembers are invited to attend.

The [32nd Annual Festival of Lights](#) and Indoor / Outdoor Arts & Crafts Fair is scheduled for **Saturday, December 2, 2023** on Main Street and at the Recreation Center (106 Royston) from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Below you will find the City of Smithville Holiday schedule. This information will be communicated on our City website, Facebook Page, and inside the November / December Utility Bill in the message section. In addition, we will post notices on the doors of City Hall one week in advance of the scheduled Holiday.

THANKSGIVING:

- Wednesday, November 22nd – (Close at Noon)
- Thursday, November 23th – Holiday
- Friday, November 24th - Holiday

CHRISTMAS:

- Friday, December 22nd – (Close at Noon)
- Monday, December 25th – Holiday
- Tuesday, December 26th – Holiday

NEW YEARS:

- Monday, January 1st – Holiday

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Have a great weekend and be sure to THANK a Veteran for their service!

--- Robert ---



PHOTOS – 11/3/23

2023 Smithville PD Nataional Night Out – Main Street



2023 Fall Festival @ the Smithville Recreation Center



2023 Chamber of Commerce WingFest



Drainage Work at The Grove Subdivision off of Loop 230



Drainage Work and Chip-seal at Smithville Municipal Airport



PHOTOS – 11/3/23 (continued)

Archaeological Dig at Proposed Detention Pond off of Loop 230



Utility Crew Re-wiring and Replacing Awning Lights on Main



Mural at NE 2nd and Main Street



Drainage Project on McSweeney



Smithville Volunteer Fire Department Demonstration @ First Baptist Church



Halloween @ City Hall

